

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CCO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

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DRAFTED BY: S/ S- O: JMCGUNNIGLE

APPROVED BY: S/ S- O: RWRIGHT

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

INFO USDEL SAN CLEMENTE IMMEDIATE IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 060119

EXDIS TOSEC 67

WHITE HOUSE PLEASE PASS TO SECRETARY ROGERS IN SAN CLEMENTE

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SECSTATE, INFO JIDDA, LONDON, SANAA,
APRIL 2, FROM ADDIS ABABA REPEATED TO YOU:

QUOTE S E C R E T ADDIS ABABA 3820

EXDIS

FROM AMBASSADOR CRAWFORD

E. O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, MCAP, MOPS, YE, YS, SA, ET

REF: SANAA 510, 517, 523; DEPT 059826; LONDON 03805

1. I JOIN DEPARTMENT IN COMMENDING CHARGE NEWTON'S RESPONSE
TO PRESENTATIONS OF PRIMIN AL- HAJRI AND CIC IRYANI. WOULD
LIKE TO ADD FOLLOWING THOUGHTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

2. WHILE YAR'S INTELLIGENCE IS GENERALLY VERY POOR, THERE
IS A RING OF PLAUSIBILITY TO DETAILED REPORT RECEIVED BY
YARG FROM ITS SOURCE IN ADEN. PDRY'S CURRENT PROPAGANDA
OFFENSIVE WITH OTHER ARAB STATES, ATTACKING SAG AND IN
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SCARCELY OBLIQUE FASHION YARG, ALLEGING ISRAELI- ETHIOPIAN MACHINATIONS IN SOUTHERN RED SEA, ETC., CONVENIENTLY OR DELIBERATELY CREATES GOOD STAGE- SETTING TO JUSTIFY PRDY MILITARY ATTACK. WHILE ITS INFO MAY BE FAULTY, THERE IS NO REASON DOUBT SINCERITY OR DEPTH OF YARG' S CONCERN, WHICH IS THE MORE JUSTIFIABLE IN LIGHT OF ITS OWN MILITARY WEAKNESS.

3. HOWEVER, PRIMIN IS PRONE TO SIMPLISTIC, BLACK- WHITE, ALL- OR- NOTHING THINKING. SENIOR MILITARY HAVE THE SPECIAL ANGUISH WHICH COMES FROM AWARENESS OF YAR' S LACK OF PREPAREDNESS IF ATTACK COMES. INTERACTING, PRIMIN AND SENIOR MILITARY ARE PROJECTING IN OUR DIRECTION AN IMAGE OF A MONOLITHIC YARG POLICY THAT MAY NOT BE THE WHOLE PICTURE.

4. WHILE IT WOULD BE HIS STYLE TO LET AL- HAJRI AND MILITARY SEE HOW FAR THEY COULD GET IN QUEST FOR EMERGENCY MILITARY AID, PRESIDENT AL- IRYANI WOULD TEND TO BE MORE MINDFUL THAN THEY OF: (A) NEED TO AVOID ACTIONS WHICH WOULD CREATE IMPRESSION OF CONFRONTATION BETWEEN A CONSERVATIVE YARG/ USG/ SAG " IMPERIALIST" COALITION ON ONE SIDE VERSUS SOCIALIST PDRY/ SOVIET " PROGRESSIVE" GROUPING ON THE OTHER AND (B) DESIRABILITY OF EXHAUSTING ALL AVAILABLE DIPLOMATIC AVENUES BEFORE BEING FORCED INTO A NEW ROUND OF WAR WITH SOUTH. DEPUTY PRIMIN/ FONMIN NU' MAN, NOW ABSENT FROM YAR, WOULD SUPPORT PRESIDENT STRONGLY ON BOTH COUNTS.

5. IF YARG' S INTELLIGENCE REPORT IS TRUE, IT IS UNREALISTIC TO THINK THAT IN A SPAN OF A FEW DAYS IT IS WITHIN OUR CAPACITY, EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, TO GET ENOUGH MILITARY EQUIPMENT INTO YEMEN TO SATISFY YARG OR MORE THAN FRACTIONALLY IMPROVE ITS DEFENSES. IF YARG RELIES WHOLLY ON THIS PATH, THEREFORE, OUR SUPPORTERS WILL BE DISAPPOINTED AND OUR DETRACTORS WILL RAISE THE BY NOW FAMILIAR CRY THAT U. S. IS A FALSE FRIEND WHICH SOUGHT RESUMPTION OF DIPLOMAITC RELATIONS LAST SUMMER FOR ITS OWN SELFISH PURPOSES AND WITH NO GENUINE INTEREST IN HELPING YAR. AT SAME TIME, WERE WE TO DO NOTHING AT ALL TO TRY TO HELP IN THE MILITARY EQUIPMENT FIELD, YARG WOULD WITH SOME JUSTICE FEEL THAT WE WERE NOT RESPONDING IN AN HOUR OF NEED.

6. OBJECTIVELY VIEWED, YARG' S BEST DEFENSE IN THIS SITUATION
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IS DIPLOMACY IN AN ARAB CONTEXT. PROMPT RECEIPT OF AT LEAST

A TOKEN QUANTITY OF MOST URGENTLY NEEDED MILITARY EQUIPMENT CAN PROVIDE A PSYCHOLOGICAL BOOST BUT DIPLOMATIC APPROACH MUST BE PUT FIRST.

7. MY SUGGESTION FOR DEPARTMENT' S CONSIDERATION WOULD BE THAT CHARGE NEWTON SEE PRESIDENT IRYANI, ON INSTRUCTIONS IN RESPONSE TO PRIMIN' S DEMARCHE, TO CONVEY MESSAGE ROUGHLY ALONG FOLLOWING LINES:

(A) USG MOVING PROMPTLY THROUGH ALL CHANNELS TO ASSESS VALIDITY OF YARG REPORT. WE WILL CONSULT WITH YARG AS SOON AS OUR OWN PICTURE IS CLEARER.

(B) WE WILL, WITH SAG, EXAMINE WHAT MIGHT BE DONE TO IMPROVE YARG DEFENSES. WE WOULD POINT OUT, HOWEVER, THAT, IF YARG REPORT IS CORRECT AS TO DATE OF INTENDED ATTACK, THERE IS NOT SUFFICIENT TIME TO INTRODUCE ENOUGH EQUIPMENT TO MAKE ANY SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENT. IN OUR JUDGMENT, YARG' S FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE SHOULD BE DIPLOMACY.

(C) ACCORDINGLY, IT USG BELIEF THAT YARG SHOULD ON CONFIDENTIAL BASIS INFORM FRIENDLY ARAB STATE OF ITS FEARS STATING THAT IF SITUATION OVER NEXT FEW DAYS SEEMS TO BE MOVING IN DIRECTION TO CONFIRM THESE, YARG WILL SEEK THEIR ASSISTANCE IN AN ARAB LEAGUE CONTEXT IN EFFORT FORESTALL ATTACK FROM SOUTH. ETHIOPIA, AT LEAST, AND PERHAPS IRAN AS WELL, SHOULD ALSO BE IMMEDIATELY INFORMED.

8. I AM OF COURSE READY TO RETURN TO SANAA AT ANY TIME IF DEPARTMENT OR SANAA CONSIDER THIS ADVISABLE. SHORT OF CHARTERING A SMALL AIRCRAFT FROM ASMARA, HOWEVER, THERE ARE NO COMMERCIAL SERVICES THAT COULD GET ME BACK TO TAIZ BEFORE APRIL 5 AND SANAA APRIL 6. I AM ALSO AWARE OF DELIQUESCENT QUALITY OF YEMENI CRISES AND EXTENT TO WHICH THE EMERGENCY RETURN OF AMERICAN AMBASSADOR MIGHT CONTRIBUTE AN ADDED SENSE OF TENSION. IF DEPARTMENT AND SANAA CONCUR, MY FEELING OF THE SITUATION WOULD BE TO TAKE A FURTHER READING ON DESIRABILITY OF MY RETURN AFTER CHARGE NEWTON SEES PRESIDENT IRYANI, IF DEPARTMENT CONSIDERS THIS PROPOSAL HAS MERIT. I DO FEEL IT IMPORTANT THAT WE GET HIS VIEWS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE SINCE OTHERWISE WE MAY FIND SITUATION INCREASINGLY DOMINATED BY ACTIVISTS LIKE AL- HAJRI, YARG MILITARY LEADERSHIP, AND SAG MINDEF PRINCE SULTAN, WHO WILL TEND FAVOR THE ROUTE OF MILITARY CONFRONTATION RATHER THAN DIPLOMACY.

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** EXDIS

*** Current Classification *** SECRET

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts:
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 APR 1973
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973STATE060119
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: O: JMCGUNNIGLE
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: RR
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: SECSTATE WASHDC
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730430/aaaahgqh.tel
Line Count: 169
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 73 SANAA 510, 517, 523, DEPT 059826, 73 LONDON 03805
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08-Jan-2002 by shawdg>; APPROVED <21 FEB 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> gwr 971112
Subject: N/A
TAGS: MCAP, MOPS, ET, SA, YE, YS
To: N/A
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005